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CLUES: Murder in the library



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Chapter 1 by Selena Raynee

Inspector Craig frowned: he didn't like being dragged out of bed before 7am, even if it was a high-profile case. While Sergeant Travis busied himself with getting inhabitants of the house together for questioning, Craig read his initial notes again and poked around.

The case stood like this.

At 2:30am 22/02/1928, Mr. Jones, a guest of the house, had his sleep disturbed by a sound of a broken glass. In his pajamas, he strolled around the house to find an origin of this disturbance, found nothing wrong and returned to sleep.

At 5:40am Mr. and Mrs. Harris, a butler and a housekeeper, went down to prepare breakfast and see to the house. They found library door locked and both French windows of the library smashed in. Inside the library, they found a corpse of one of the guests, Mr. Bodi. They notified Mr. Waley-Scott of their discovery and called police at 6am sharp.

Upon arriving, police and coroner ascertained that:

- 1) Library door was locked and key was nowhere to be found. Mr. Harris testified that when he had gone to sleep yesterday (around 10pm) the door was locked.
- 2) French windows were locked and there was no sign that they were opened from the outside.
- 3) Mr. Bodi was a retired high society member who had been known to operate in high society. He was killed by a blunt-force trauma to the back of his head around 2am in the morning, give or

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take one hour.

4) A stone was found near the body that could have been used to smash the windows with. It wasn't used to kill Mr. Bodi, because there were no traces of blood on it.

5) There was one broken china vase lying in the corner of the room. No blood on it.

6) A candlestick that used to stand on the mantelpiece now lay on the floor near locked library door. No blood on it.

Residents of the house included:

1) Mr. Waley-Scott, 28, owner of the house

2) Ms. Linden, 20, his fiancée, aspiring artist

3) Mrs. Linden, 44, her mother, high-society cougar

4) Mr. Jones, 52, history professor, guest of Mrs. Linden

5) Mr. and Mrs. Harris, (butler and housekeeper)

6) Mr. Bodi, 72, guest of Mr. Waley-Scott

Travis returned, informing Inspector Craig that Mr. Waley-Scott wished to see him as soon as possible.

Chapter 2 by intellikat



Mr. Harris drew the doors to the study closed and Inspector Craig turned to the owner of the house, who was sitting rather comfortably behind a regal-looking desk.

"Please, sit down." Mr. Waley-Scott motioned to an empty chair in front of the desk.

"What is your butler's first name?" said Inspector Craig, accepting the invitation.

"Harris?" Mr. Waley-Scott paused. "You know, we've called him Harris for so long-- I believe... I believe his name is Ben. Or it is Bill? Sorry. Strange. I don't recall."

"Don't you sign his paycheck each month?"

"No. I don't pay the staff by check. Cash only."

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"I see."

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"Sorry, is this pertinent?"

"Please. You wanted to speak in private?"

"Indeed. There's something I wanted be forthright in telling you, in the event it comes out later. It's concerning the relationship I had with Mr. Bodi."

Mr. Waley-Scott stood, and moved to the window of the study that overlooked the lush gardens beyond.

"Ms. Linden... Jocelyn. We're engaged to be married at month's end."

"Yes. Congratulations. My sergeant told me. Apparently this weekend was to be something of a preparation?"

"That's right. Her mother, Mrs. Linden arrived with her... erm... guest Mr. Jones two days ago. Lyn's mother is very good at this sort of thing. I'm absolutely dreadful, you see. Not my thing at all. I let the women go about the business of planning the affair, and I simply wait for the bill to arrive."

"And Mr. Bodi...?"

"Yes. Danforth Bodi." Waley-Scott returned to the desk. "I hadn't anticipated his arrival here at the time."

"I thought he was your guest."

"He was. Uninvited, though. I know you are aware of his somewhat distasteful past occupation."

"Yes."

"He appeared the day after Lyn's mother arrived. We spoke in this very study. It seems he had in his possession some... information that might sully the wedding. Something regarding Lyn's past. I can't say what it was exactly. He never had the chance to tell me. Simply a veiled threat of revealing the information, whatever it was, on the eve of the wedding to the local papers. He

was going to reveal to me what it was today, but never had the chance it seems."

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"And you believed him?"

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"There was one thing Bodi said that caused me to believe he wasn't bluffing. Lyn's father died in a accident nearly three years ago. Tragic fire. Conflagration that destroyed their manor stables. Bodi mentioned something about it that was never made public. As far as I know, only Lyn, her mother, and I knew of it. Mr. Linden had taken out a rather large insurance policy on the stables only one month before the fire. Due to certain... circumstances around the event, it didn't pay out. At the time, the Lindens were quite heartbroken and certainly didn't need the money, so they let it pass. There was no scandal possible because of this, and none of it about the policy ever got out. But Bodi seemed to know of it, which was rather odd."

"And how did that connect to blackmailing your fiancé?"

"Bodi indicated he had gathered the information regarding the policy from Mr. Linden himself, before his death. He indicated that he had held a rather... intimate relationship with Lyn's father, and that he had revealed more than this to Bodi in the past. This was presumably where the information about Lyn had come from."

Mr. Waley-Scott sighed.

"Of course, Bodi's threat of blackmailing Lyn and I could be construed as a motive on my part. So I wanted to be transparent in this regard. I did not kill Danforth Bodi, nor did I have any involvement or knowledge about it. But I'll be quite honest in saying... it's something of a relief. As bad as that sounds, on a human level I suppose you can understand."

"I appreciate your transparency," said Inspector Craig, standing. "Did you speak with Mrs. Linden or her daughter about the apparent blackmail?"

"No, of course not."

"I see," said the Inspector. As he turned to the door, he noticed a furtive movement between the door, as if someone had been there and then moved away. "Is there anyone you might suspect?"

"Indeed" said Waley-Scott calmly. "Mr. Linden himself"

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Mr. Jones tells Inspector Craig that he heard rumors that Mrs. Linden had murdered her second child in a fit of rage

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